

# THE HISTORIAN



Vol 2, Issue 3 Oct/Nov 2022



PORT HOPE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

8016 Portland Ave, Box 133, Port Hope, MI 48468

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As soon as the new sawmill was built along the shores at Dimond Creek, the small community of Port Hope began to develop. New construction included a boarding house for workers, a couple of resident houses, a blacksmith shop, a bark shanty schoolhouse, a wagon builder, a furniture maker and a couple of general stores. The entire village was within a few yards of the lake shore. It was only about 8 to 10 years later that buildings began to appear along what we now know as Main street.

An Indian trail on the high ground and the surrounding land became cleared of trees, and a boarding house, Masonic Hall, company store and Mr. Stafford's residence were built there. The major new building was a beautiful new schoolhouse constructed at the intersection of what is now Dean street and Main street. A newspaper article in the summer of 1871 touted the features of the new building and announced the upcoming fall opening of the school.

As a result of the timber cutting, piles of brush covered most of the landscape in the area, and a dry spell turned that spoil into a potential disaster. On October 9, 1871, fire spread through the piles of discarded limbs and branches, and turned the Thumb area into an inferno. The entire waterfront of the shoreline community was destroyed, and as the fire moved inland, the new schoolhouse also burned to the ground. But miraculously, the rest of the buildings along Main street were spared.

In the years to come, the village grew up out of the ashes, and centered its location on the higher ground along and west of Main street. It was a rebirth that brought new life to the community.

Port Hope is now experiencing a rebirth. Old buildings are being restored and brought back into use. Businesses are starting to reopen along Main street. Community volunteers are working on numerous projects that are creating a revitalization of our village.

We are so grateful for the many folks who have offered their time and talents to join the renewal efforts. We also invite everyone to consider becoming a part of the volunteer efforts by stopping by the Port Hope Area Historical Society and learning more about our efforts to make Port Hope a wonderful place to live and work.

Jim Hunter, Society President

## THINGS ARE A CHANGING

Adding to what Jim Hunter wrote, I would like to repeat that Port Hope is in the process of revitalization. Buildings are being renovated, new businesses are being opened and there is an increased involvement from the town's people, newcomers and original Port Hoper's relocating back to their hometown. With my mother being born in Port Hope and my dad in Harbor Beach. I always had a love for this little town. Living just north of Detroit, our visits usual took place only for reunions or infrequent family visits. Over the years we could see evidence of decline with the big box stores in big cities nearby taking their toll on our little village, and it was suffering with businesses closing and progress being slowed.

As the renovation of the Train Depot was gaining steam, Sharon and I became more involved and we started coming up here regularly for Depot meetings, etc. We soon realized something quite unexpected. A community involvement, a renewed spirit, something exciting was going on. What impressed upon us the most were the people, their friendliness, their community spirit, and their tireless involvement in the town's revitalization

Now on our regular visits to Port Hope, we see change each time we drive into town. comparing today's village to the village as it was five years ago, we are in awe. The beautiful Mercantile, The Township Hall, The Train Depot and Caboose, The Marina, Stafford Park Cottages, businesses and buildings being purchased with plans for improvement, the Hotel, Buck's Diner, and much much more. How about the fantastic ice cream cones?. The desire to preserve the old buildings, the Red Church, the Chimney, all are on the minds of the people. There is an excitement growing and like a Pere Marquette locomotive rolling down the tracks, it is hard to stop.

And now add to this, the Port Hope Area Historical Society. Its purpose is to preserve the history of the Port Hope area. To make it a "gotta see it" destination visit, for local history as well as a genealogical center for family histories.

The efforts are paying off and Port Hope is coming alive!. This newsletter focuses primarily on our Historical Society and its events etc., but we feel it important to show the progress not only with the Society, but with things going on around town. Take a look at the pictures and you will realize that while it's called "The Little Town with the Big Welcome", It is becoming "The Not So Little Town with the Big Big Welcome"

Alger Rutz

# THE HISTORIAN SOCIETY UPDATES

## SOCIETY BUILDING RENOVATION

Our society building (The old Brinker Lumber Co.) is well on its way to being renovated both inside and outside. The progress is going amazingly well. We owe it all to the community volunteers who are spending several days a week working on the endless number of projects.



Front face of our building being blasted, scraped and readied for paint. Flowers planted.



West side of building gets new windows, steel roofing and siding. Next will be the east side.



The new concession room being walled in.



The concession room is being outfitted with a new refrigerator, pop corn machine & kitchen equip.



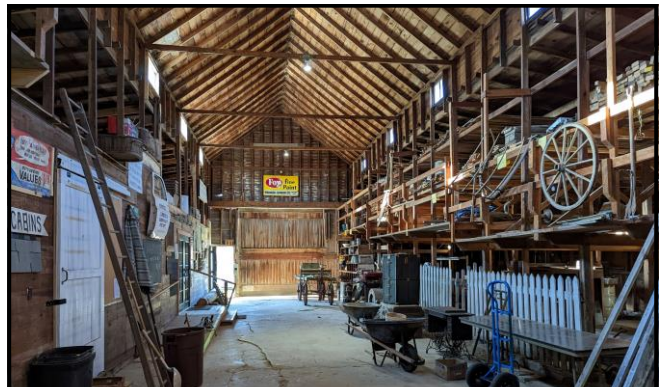
Cement being poured in the bay areas.



The Port Hope Boyz, all volunteers, each making their contribution.



Little by little the individual projects, no matter how hard, are completed.



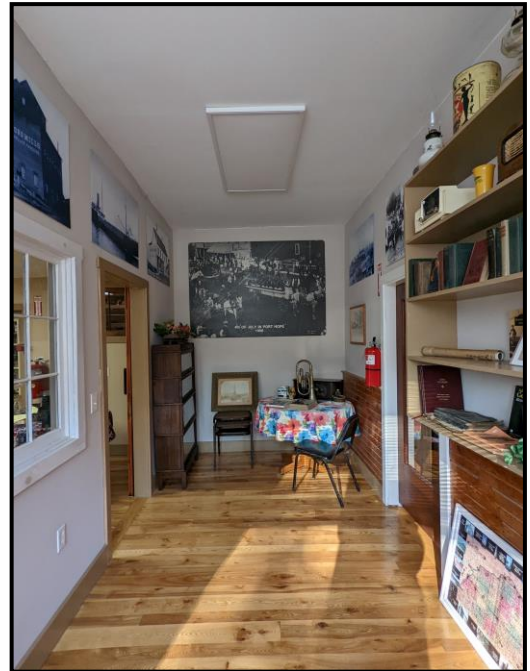
Tools & equipment set aside at the end of the day. Time to go home & relax.

## THE GLADYS & RB HUNTER HISTORICAL RESEARCH CENTER

We are currently gathering and cataloging family histories and stories that are donated to the Research Center. Our goal is to have an extensive history of the area and the families that immigrated to start a new life. To provide visitors the means to spend time at our genealogy center and research a particular family tree using available donated documents or on-line using our computers, printers and copy machines.



Room number one of our two research center rooms showing books, family trees and historical documents. Much more is currently being readied for display.



Another view showing vintage photos of the Port Hope Area. The computers and copy machines are behind the camera.

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING AND CONF. ROOM

Recently completed, our conference room and meeting center with a restroom is the central point for the Port Hope Area Historical Society. With room enough for a fairly large number of people, it is used for our monthly meetings, Memory Lunches and various society events. It has a kitchen counter with cupboards, sink, microwave & small refrigerator.



The south side of the conf. center shows the kitchen counter, restroom and the entrance to the Gladys & RB Hunter Historical Research Center.



The north side of the conf. center shows the meeting area and various artifacts donated by local individuals.

# THE HISTORIAN SOCIETY UPDATES

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY SAMPLINGS

In two short years the historical society has taken in hundreds of artifacts, vintage tools, and household items. A horse drawn buggy and a mail wagon both restored to excellent condition. A 12-foot-long diorama display of Port Hope Main Street as it existed years ago conjures up conversation and stories of past times. The following pics are a small sampling of the items that are on display. We encourage any donations of items whether an item from the barnyard, a machine, tool or a kitchen item.



Incoming donation staging area, for recording and cataloging of items.



Buch's, Pennsylvania No 3, Hand Crank 44 inch Corn Sheller



Originally the organ in Port Hope's Methodist Church



Mail Buggy built by Harold Finkel 90 years ago.



Family buggy donated by Carol Nickel Roggenbuck



Even a large Santa Claus was donated to the society and as always, Santa is certainly a welcome addition.



While still privately owned, an original Brinker Lumber Co. 1937 Ford 2-Ton Truck.



Port Hope Main Street in miniature with little Port Hope people and an available book describing their stories and a history of each building.



A Shaving Horse for shaping wood into shingles using a draw knife.

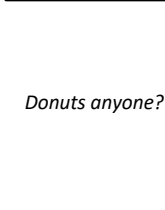
# THE HISTORIAN SOCIETY UPDATES

## SOCIETY AND PORT HOPE EVENTS

Every year, Port Hope comes alive. Our many events continue to draw huge crowds. Add to this the Historical Society and Train Depot events and we see a very positive future. All things take time, but Port Hope is moving in the right direction. A sampling of recent pictures.



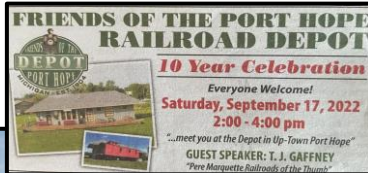
ABC Day Car Show



Donuts anyone?



Hope Activity center



Train Depot 10 year Celebration.



Large crowds touring the historical society during the fourth of July.



Joey Woodke, Port Hope's Gold Medalist honored during 4th parade.



Hobo Experience, now a yearly fun family event.



Tip of the Thumb Model T's.

Model T's are coming to Port Hope August 28!



Over 90 Ford Model T cars, dated 1908-1927, will be at the Port Hope Depot around 1:30 Saturday. Public is welcome to come and see the cars.

For more information about the Tip of the Thumb Tour go to [www.michiganjamboree.org](http://www.michiganjamboree.org)



### OUR LITTLE TOWN WITH THE BIG WELCOME

In looking at the photos in this issue, It is evident that the addition of the Port Hope Area Historical Society, the Train Depot, the Caboose, and all of the upgrades to our town, have made a major difference. The Chamber of Commerce, The Lions Club, The Hope Community Center, The volunteer Fire Department, our city leaders, all contribute to the success of Port Hope.

Besides the organized groups, societies and town events. There is another important aspect that certainly attracts visitors to our community. It's the condition of many of the old houses throughout the town. Original houses, well over 100 years old, beautifully maintained or refurbished. The look of the buildings and businesses on Main Street. Many have been renovated and others are in the planning stages. And of course, the positive attitude and involvement of the people themselves.

**Its all about preservation of our town's history, it's past, it's preparation for the future and most importantly, it's people. It is our hope that the Port Hope Area Historical Society can play a part in achieving the above.**



**ACTUAL PICTURE... GHOSTS??**



**IS BRINKER LUMBER HAUNTED?  
SEE FOR YOURSELF, OCT 29, 30 & 31<sup>ST</sup>  
IF YOUR VERY BRAVE , SHOW UP AND  
YOU MIGHT JUST SEE GHOSTS DANCING**

### UPCOMING EVENTS



**CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
 ALL MEMBERS INVITED  
 PORT HOPE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 &  
 FRIENDS OF THE PORT HOPE RAILROAD DEPOT  
 Nov 12<sup>th</sup> 6 PM  
 Location: Village Fire Hall  
 Bring finger food or dessert to pass



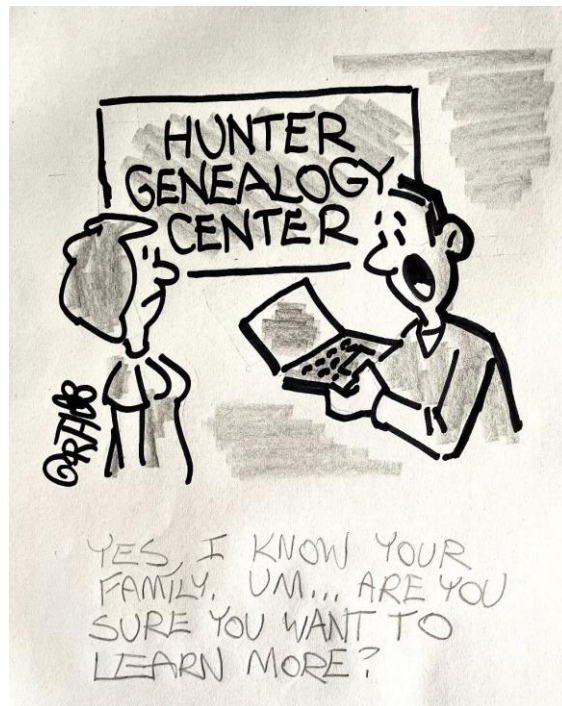
FINAL WORDS

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS**

As our summer has past, the leaves are falling, and the year will soon be coming to a close. We want to thank each and every one of our society members, as it is your involvement that has allowed us to accomplish so much in only a few years. We are far from finished and would hope that each of you would continue your involvement and help us become a center for our townspeople as well as visitors from near and far.

A sincere thank you from the Port Hope Area Historical Society.

Member renewal letters will be sent out soon for memberships that are lapsing at the end of 2022. We would certainly appreciate your renewing your society membership.



"GARTHTOONS" brought to you by Garth Kriewall

**Interested in becoming a member of the society? Or want to make a donation? Please fill out and mail the form below.**

**Membership / Contribution Form**

Please fill out this form and mail with your check to:  
 P.H.A.H.S.  
 P.O. Box 133  
 Port Hope MI, 48468



**Port Hope Area Historical Society**  
 8016 Portland Ave.  
 Port Hope MI, 48468  
 Questions: 989-428-4831

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Yearly Membership: Single** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$25.00) **Family** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$40.00)  
 January 1 thru December 31 (must be renewed each calendar year by May 15)

**Life Member** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$500) **Founders/Life Member** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$1,000.00)

All members will receive the quarterly newsletter and member names listed periodically in the newsletter. Founders & Life Members will have a plaque at the Historical Center with their name on it.

**This section is for a contribution that may be made with or without a membership.**

I would like to support the Port Hope Area Historical Society to further its development and wish to make a contribution in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Make check payable to: "Port Hope Area Historical Society".  
 ( Contributions to the PHAHS, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization are tax deductible according to IRS guidelines.)